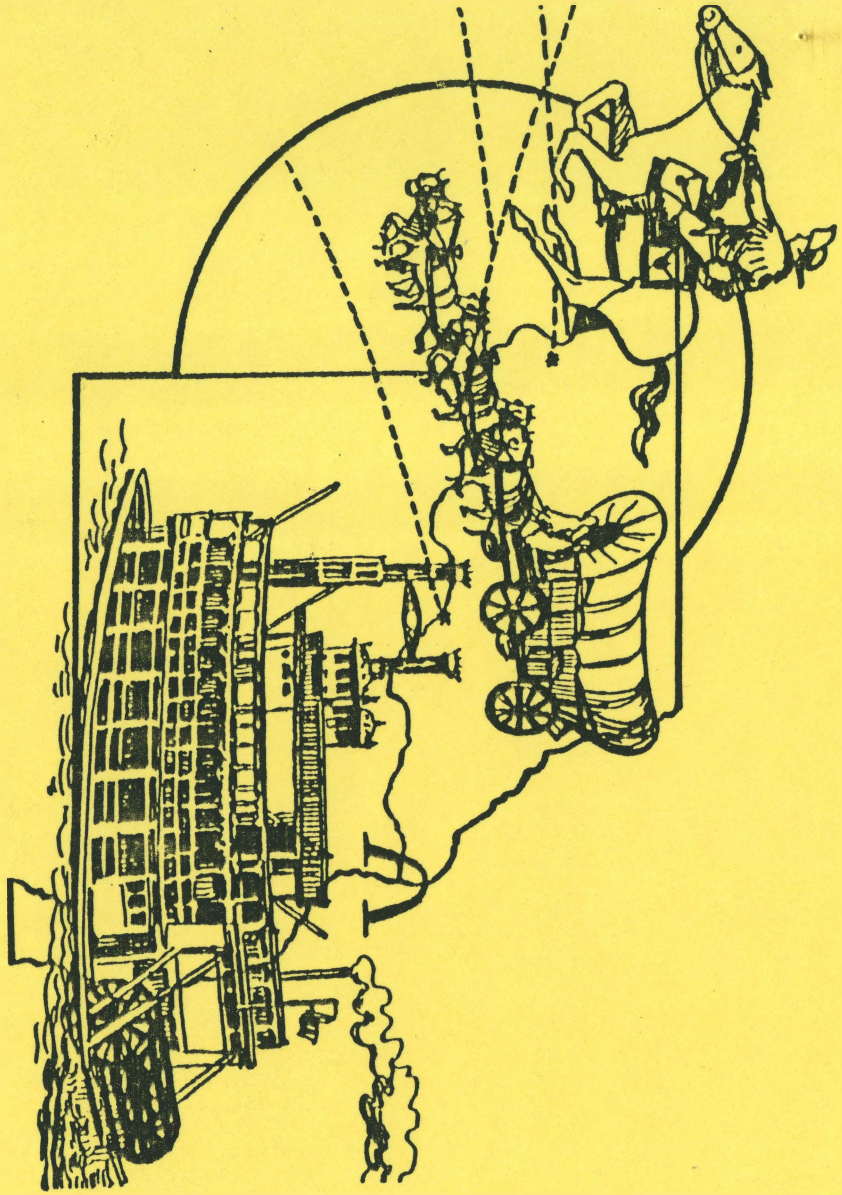
Fall, 1988



Toward the Setting Sun....

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of

The United Methodist Church

The Missouri Area

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From the Editor;

We are very proud to present this issue dedicated to the memory of Bishop Ivan Lee Holt. The first article is a reprint of the historical address given by Dr. Albea Godbold, then Executive Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, at the Missouri East Annual Conference in 1981. It was first printed in the conference journal for that year and is reprinted here by permission of the secretary of the conference, Bob Hemmerla.

The memories of Bishop Holt shared with you by some of the pastors who knew him well will trigger your own memories. I remember when I was in high school, our minister was very ill. One night at the supper table, my Dad received a phone call from Bishop Holt. The annual conference was in session, the cabinet was working on the appointments, and the Bishop was planning to move our pastor so the church would not be hurt because of his illness. Dad was chairman of the board, and the person the Bishop chose to call with the announcement. Dad told him we would not accept another pastor, that only Harold was welcome in that congregation. The Bishop argued that our minister was sick, would probably never be able to preach again and that he was concerned about our church. Dad told him not to worry about the church, we'd take care of it, and every argument the Bishop had for moving our pastor was an even better argument for leaving him in a community where he was loved.

I was thrilled that our minister would not be moved, but I have to confess I was a little nervous about anyone arguing with Bishop Holt---he seemed too much like God to a youth for anyone to disagree with! Surely lightning would strike us all right then! Later, I had the opportunity to meet Bishop Holt and know him as a warm and caring person. He never came through the doors of our church without knowing the lay people by name. He knew even the youth and called us by name. What a magnificent gift of memory and of friendship the man had!

I never had the privilege of serving as pastor under the leadership of Bishop Holt, but who he was and what he stood for have been a major influence in my life, as I'm sure they have been for many of you who will be reading this issue. May it bring you joy and warm memories.

Remember that all editorial correspondence, manuscripts, and ideas for articles need to come to the editor at

5061 English Village Drive
Nashville, Tennessee, 37211.

Subscriptions should be sent to

Mrs. Maurine Whitworth
5528 Tennessee
St. Louis, Missouri 63111.

Shalom,

John

John O. Gooch

BISHOP IVAN LEE HOLT

WORLD TRAVELER AND DEVOTEE OF CHURCH COOPERATION

Albea Godbold

Ivan Lee Holt was the most widely traveled churchman of his day. Beginning in 1911 at 25 and continuing until he was nearly 81, he crossed the Atlantic some sixty-five times and went around the world ten times. After he began traveling by air, he said he went 60,000 to 70,000 miles per year.

Holt said he had visited all the continents of the world and all sections of each continent, from the top of the North Cape of Norway to the Cape of Good Hope at the southern end of Africa and also to the tip of southern New Zealand.

John R. Mott, a widely traveled church leader, told Holt he had visited 83 countries. Holt replied that he had been in 90, expected to visit three or four more on his next trip, and hoped to reach not fewer than 100 countries before he died.

When traveling Holt sought out church leaders, especially those who were interested in cooperation and union. He wrote, "Practically all of the men who have been ecclesiastical leaders in their respective denominations as bishops, as moderators, as presidents, I have known well...It is very difficult for me to think of any man who has had a conspicuous role to play in the work of cooperative Protestantism in America or the

world whom I have not known in this past half century. I think it is doubtful whether any man of my generation has known personally more of the great leaders of our time in the work of the church than I."

Early Life and Education

Consider now the story of Holt's life. He was born January 9, 1886 in DeWitt, a county seat town in southeast Arkansas, the first child of Robert Paine and Ella Thomas Holt. Holt's father was born in Aberdeen, Mississippi, and his mother came from Rushville, Indiana. Their second son, Robert Earl, was born in 1888. The father died at 36 in 1892 when his sons were six and four years old. He left his family little aside from the home in DeWitt.

Determined to educate her sons, the widow moved in 1897 to Fordyce, Arkansas, and enrolled them in the Fordyce Training School which was under Methodist patronage. In 1901 Ivan Lee was graduated at the top of his class, winning the scholarship medal. The family then moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where at the age of 15 Ivan Lee took the Vanderbilt University entrance examinations and placed second highest in the entering freshman class.

After two years in Nashville, the mother had to go to Indiana to care for her grandparents. Surveying the family finances, Ivan Lee determined that there was just enough money to pay for one more year of college for himself and his brother

who would be a freshman. On the mother's departure, the two boys moved into a fraternity house. Then Ivan Lee persuaded the dean to allow him to take all necessary courses for graduation at commencement. Thus in 1904, after only three @years in college, Holt won his B.A. degree along with Phi Beta Kappa, thereby demonstrating both ability and the willingness to work hard. He was then 18, the age at which most young people enter college.

While in college Holt found or took time for social life. For two years Eleanora Wills, daughter of the Nashville postmaster, was his girl friend. Her parents then sent her to Europe for a year of study, and Holt then paid court to Sallie Skinner, a student at nearby Belmont College. Unfortunately she died of appendicitis, and every year for more than sixty years Holt wrote a note of remembrance to her family. Holt said that while at Vanderbilt he associated with young people from the first families of Nashville. The statement is revealing. The man had <u>savoir faire,</u> a ready knowledge of how to deal with people. He made friends easily among people of prominence, wealth, and social standing, while at the same time he was at ease with and liked by average folks.

As a lad Holt aspired to be a lawyer, and on finishing college he could have gone into law or banking with a college friend who was the son of a Tennessee congressman. However, he felt obligated to earn money at once so as to help his mother

and his brother. Moreover, while in college he became aware that he preferred teaching or the ministry, vocations related to books, character building, and religion. So he became professor of Greek and Latin in the Training School at Stuttgart, Arkansas, some twenty miles from his native town of DeWitt, a school patronized by the Methodist Church. He remained there three years.

While Holt was at Stuttgart, a young woman, Leland Burks of Marshall, Missouri, a graduate of Central College, came as the music teacher. The head of the school warned his unmarried men teachers in advance against love affairs in the faculty, and then said Miss Burks was so dignified and self-possessed that she would not notice them. He was mistaken. Holt was soon in love with her, and they were married on June 6, 1906, when he was twenty and she was twenty-six.

Holt was married three times. Leland Burks died in 1948. In 1950 he married Starr B. Carrithers of Winder, Georgia, a charming and capable woman who was a great help to her husband. She was esteemed and loved by Missouri Methodists. She died in 1958. In April 1966, Holt married Modena McPherson Rudisell of Duluth, Georgia, and she survived him.

After Holt's first marriage, the couple continued one more year at Stuttgart. In preparation for graduate school, both were tutored one night a week by a woman who knew German. Also, Holt studied Sanskrit under the Methodist pastor, R.B.

McSwain, who had taken courses in Semitic languages at the University of Chicago.

In June 1907 Holt entered the University of Chicago to work for the Ph.D. degree in Semitic languages. He studied Assyrian, Babylonian, Hebrew, Aramaic, Syrian, Arabic, and Coptic. Mrs. Holt earned an M.A. degree in Greek. They had financial difficulties; Holt said that at times they did not have enough money to buy food. But they persevered, and in December 1909 he was awarded the Ph.D. degree. For his thesis he translated 200 Babylonian cuneiform tablets. It was a remarkable academic achievement. He was still a little less than 24 years old.

As the time of his graduation drew near. Holt received flattering invitations to teach Semitic languages in ranking universities, including Harvard and Johns Hopkins. He chose Harvard. Meantime, John M. Moore, a friend of the family and later bishop, intervened. Moore urged Holt to stay in the south and enter the ministry, adding that he believed Holt knew that was his work.

Early Pastorates

After serious thought and prayer, Holt abandoned the plan to teach, joined the St. Louis Conference, and was appointed to University City. A layman had donated a lot, but there was no church building nor any members when Holt arrived. He enrolled members and organized the church in January 1910. He began

circulating widely, came to know many people, and said he preached in every Methodist church in St. Louis at least once. He met prominent businessmen whose wives were leaders in the social life. Some became members of his church and some did not. He said that many who were not members thought of themselves as "more of less identified with University Church".

At conference in 1911 Holt was moved to Cape Girardeau. A petition signed by more non-members than members urged that he be returned to University Church. The bishop would not agree. The people then proposed to withdraw and form a community church. Holt declined to help. However, when writing about it half a century later, he said the move cut short constructive work he had started, and he added that some of those families he had known in his first pastorate were still among his closest and dearest friends.

Arriving in Cape Girardeau, Holt found Centenary Church heavily in debt, and not even paying the interest on the debt. The chairman of the building committee was unable to pay his pledge and others refused to pay until he did. Holt worked hard, smoothed ruffled tempers, and in time the debt was paid. Then calamity struck; fire destroyed the church. Fortunately insurance paid for a new building, but the situation required work and sacrifice.

The Holts' son and only child, Ivan Lee, Jr., was born in 1913. Today he is a superior court judge in St. Louis. Mean-

time, the young pastor entered actively into the life of the town, joining in the fight to close the saloons, speaking at chapel in the Teachers' College, and developing friendships which lasted a lifetime. Through the years, especially after becoming a bishop, he was invited back for sermons and addresses, and relations with the people became so close and friendly that he said Cape Girardeau seemed like his old home town.

Of course word got around that Holt was a young minister of promise, and during his first year at Cape Girardeau Bishop Edwin D. Mouzon offered him Rayne Memorial Church, New Orleans, at a salary of $3,000, double the amount he was receiving. But Holt and his wife decided not to run from a hard job. In his third year First Church, Fort Worth, offered him $5,000. Though he was then receiving only $2,000, he decided to stay at Cape Girardeau. How many of us preachers here today would have turned down such a flattering offer?

Professor at S.M.U.

In 1915 when the denomination was launching Emory and Southern Methodist Universities, Holt was asked to take the chair of Old Testament at S.M.U. He declined, saying he was dedicated to the pastorate. Bishop Mouzon countered, "If the pastorate means so much to you, why not give some years of your life training other men for it?"

Yielding to that appeal, Holt went to S.M.U. in 1915 as professor of Old Testament, chairman of the Theology School Faculty, and chaplain to the University. Though he served three years in those capacities, apparently he did not make an enviable record as a teacher or an administrator. However, during that time he became widely and favorably known as a popular speaker at civic meetings, luncheon clubs, and the like. A colleague said of him, "Give him twenty-four hours' notice and he will speak on any subject from the growth of Irish potatoes to Shakespeare's women." President R.S. Hyer said, "This man knows not only the leaders of Dallas and its social life, but I think he knows more janitors than any man in the city." When it was announced that Holt would leave Dallas, some fifty-six organizations sponsored a farewell luncheon for him.

St. John's Church, St. Louis

In the fall of 1918 at the age of 32, Holt was offered St. John's Church, St. Louis. Convinced by that time that he belonged in the pastorate, he said he was thrilled at the thought of going to that prestigious church. He served twenty years, turning down in the meantime all offers of other pastorates both inside and outside of Methodism, along with tempting invitations to teach or become president of educational institutions. During his pastorate the membership of St. John's rose from 600 to about 1,200.

While at St. John's, Holt traveled over the world. Regularly he went overseas every other year and sometimes more often. He took part in movements and activities which in the nature of the case required thought, time, and absences from St. Louis. He delivered lectures at a college in Australia, and served as visiting preacher at a Presbyterian church in England. One year his church officials voted to give him three months off to serve as visiting preacher at the Community Church in Shanghai, China. Toward the end of his life he said he had preached in fifty of the one hundred union churches in Christendom.

Those of us who are, so to speak, millrun pastors, may wonder how any man could continue as pastor of one church for twenty years and spend as much time away from his parish as Holt did. Laymen are usually willing for their pastor to have a summer vacation of two to four weeks and to be away briefly at other times for good reasons. But we know that the Methodist pastor who is away too much may find that he is moved away when his annual conference meets.

Apparently there was no strong objection to Holt's absences from his parish, but there was some good-natured teasing. The young adults presented a play in which a man supposed to be Dr. Holt came on the stage dressed in summer attire, including a straw hat, and carrying a suitcase. The stage scenery showed that he was at the instersection of Kings-

highway and Washington, St. Louis, with church edifices on three corners---St. John's, Second Baptist, and Temple Israel. A bit surprised, he looked up and said, "Oh, yes, that is St. John's Church. I am the pastor there during the winter!" That scene brought down the house and many recalled it and laughed about it years later.

Holt may not have been a popular pastor in the usual meaning of the term. He did not preach to big crowds every Sunday or promote a multitude of parish activities, and except for collecting $300,000 in the midnineteen twenties to build Singleton Chapel and the education building, he did not raise large sums of money each year. However, it is fair to say that he had effective ways and means of keeping in touch with and maintaining the good will of his parishioners. Indeed he was so highly esteemed by the church members that the late John Brandon Peters who served St. John's four years as Holt's immediate successor, paid Holt a facetious, left-handed compliment by saying that any man appointed to that church for some years to come would do well to bear in mind that the members regarded Ivan Lee Holt as their god.

How, then, did Holt succeed as a pastor? For one thing, he usually had good helpers: an associate pastor, an able secretary, and a paid church visitor.

Also, Holt wrote letters. He said that he was a writer of letters of congratulation and condolence. He may have

written more letters with pen and ink than any Methodist preacher since John Wesley. When at home at night, when on the road, when half way round the world, he was continually writing personal letters. A layman who had a summer cottage in Michigan invited the Holts there for a week or more several different years. He said that after dinner at night, Holt would spend one to two hours writing in longhand as many as twenty letters. Of course he also dictated letters in his office. The late William I. Bird, who grew up in St. John's Church and assisted in the office in the summer while in college, told this writer that it was not unusual for him to sign Holt's name to as many as one hundred letters on a given day. Those personal letters made parishioners and others alike aware that Holt knew them and that he cared. And is not that of the essence of effectiveness as a pastor?

Again, Holt had a marvelous capacity for friendship. Probably most of his parishioners regarded him not only as their pastor but also as a personal friend. He made friends quickly and easily, and to use Shakespeare's phrase, he bound them to him with hoops of steel. William C. Martin, who was elected bishop with Holt and others in 1938, declared, "Ivan Lee Holt has the greatest capacity for friendship of any man I have ever known." Surely many others who knew Holt personally would agree.

In 1942, shortly after this writer arrived in St. Louis,

a layman introduced him to a Jewish businessman downtown as the new pastor at St. John's. The man's face lighted up with a smile, and as he shook hands, he said, "Oh, that was Dr. Holt's church. Dr. Holt was my very good friend!" As we walked on the way, the layman said, "Preacher, as time passes you may hear some such expression as that in this city from Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, black and white." Holt's great capacity for friendship was a real asset.

Once more, Holt's tireless physique and hard work helped him. Did anyone who knew him ever see him when he looked tired or hear him complain of fatigue? While in college he heard a sermon, the three points of which he adopted as his motto for life, "Know thyself. Forget theyself. And then turn loose on what you do with divine recklessness." Holt knew himself and the ways in which he could excel. He may not always have forgotten himself, but surely he did work hard and enthusiastically, and the pastor who does that usually succeeds.

President of Federal Council of Churches

Apparently Holt's interest in church cooperation began soon after he went to St. John's. The St. Louis Metropolitan Church Federation was organized in 1916, and for the next half century it was a strong organization which promoted cooperation and fellowship among the Protestant churches of the city. While at St. John's Church, Holt served two different terms as president of the Federation, a sure sign of deep interest in

the cause it represented.

In 1935 while still pastor of St. John's Church, Holt was elected president of the Federal Council of Churches, the first pastor ever to be named president. The office made him widely known in America and abroad. Two years later when he was elected bishop, Samuel McCrea Cavert, secretary of the Federal Council, said of Holt, "No man in the history of American Protestantism has had so many, so wide, and so valuable contacts" as Bishop Holt.

In 1936 while Holt was president, the Federal Council sponsored a National Preaching Mission in which twenty-five strong preachers, led by E. Stanley Jones, traveled to the larger cities of the nation and conducted preaching missions in churches, schools, and auditoriums. That preaching mission attracted national attention and received good publicity. It was estimated that 25,000 preachers and 2,500,000 lay people attended the services. As planned, the mission was to close, after several days of preaching in New York, with a great mass meeting in Madison Square Garden. When the team arrived in New York, the local committee urged holding the closing service in a smaller auditorium, saying it would be impossible to fill Madison Square Garden. The preachers would not agree, and on the last night Madison Square Garden was filled to overflowing. Thus the mission ended on a climactic note. Some said the preaching mission revived the confidence of American Protestant

ism, which had been somewhat weakened by the great economic depression.

After his term as president of the Federal Council, Holt served on many of its committees, and in 1950-51 he helped to draw up the charter of the National Council of Churches which superseded the Federal Council.

When the World Council of Churches was formed and held its first meeting in Amesterdam in 1948, Holt became a member of the important Central Committee which meets once a year to care for the business of the organization between the plenary sessions which are held once in six years. At the second session of the World Council in Evanston, Illinois, in 1954, Holt was chosen to conduct the great communion service, an honor which was a tribute to his leadership in the cause of Christian unity.

President of the World Methodist Council

Holt was also interested in Methodist fellowship and union. He was a member of the Commission on Unification of the M.E. Church, South which aided in the creation of The Methodist Church in 1939. He attended the Methodist Ecumenicral Conferences which met every ten years prior to World War II. The one scheduled for 1941 did not meet because of the war. In 1946 he went to England bearing an invitation for the next Ecumenical Conference to meet in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1947. At

that session the name was changed to World Methodist Conference, because it signified an organization, not just a gathering for inspiration and fellowship. Holt was elected as the first president of the World Methodist Conference in 1947, and at that time the organization decided to meet once every five years instead of every ten years.

At the World Council of Churches in 1948, some leaders frowned on world denominational fellowships such as the World Methodist Conference, saying they would not produce the right kind of Christian fellowship. They said it would be less than the fellowship of the World Council of Churches which included many denominations. Holt disagreed. He did not believe his interest in a world Methodist organization would weaken his interest in and support of the World Council of Churches. The officers of the World Council soon reached the same conclusion, as shown by the fact that they initiated in Geneva yearly meetings with the secretaries of the Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian world fellowships.

Elected Bishop

Now consider Holt's election to the episcopacy and his eighteen years of active service. Many believed when he went to St. John's Church, St. Louis, at 32, he would in time be elected bishop. As the years passed and he became widely and favorably known, some wondered why he was not elected a bishop when some men who were hardly known outside their own annual

conferences were. Possibly one reason was that his service was to Protestantism as a whole and not primarily to his own denomination. Also, it may be that a few particular circumstances delayed his election. He might have become a bishop in 1934, but because of the economic depression there were no elections that year. Three bishops were elected in 1930, but he was not a delegate to the General Conference that year. A preacher in the St. Louis Conference who did not like Holt managed to keep him from being chosen as a delegate to the General Conference. The sequel to that story is interesting. Eight years later when Holt became bishop of the Dallas Area that man was a pastor in Dallas! He told a friend he was concerned about what might happen to him. He need not have been afraid; there was no spirit of revenge in Ivan Lee Holt. Bishop Holt, aware that the man had ability, appointed him as a presiding elder. Where? In El Paso, 600 miles from Dallas but still in the Dallas Area!

Seven bishops were elected in 1938. Ivan Lee Holt was chosen on the first ballot by a large majority, an indication that his election was a foregone conclusion before the General Conference convened. At that time someone might have appropriately said to Holt what a preacher said to A. Frank Smith when he was made a bishop in 1930. He said, "Bishop Smith, I am not going to congratulate you on your election; I just wish to express my amazement that they were so long in giving you what was coming to you anyway!"

Bishop of Dallas Area

Bishop Holt served the Dallas Area six years, 1938-1944. Geographically it extended some 700 miles, from about 100 miles east of Dallas to El Paso, and it included the North Texas, Central Texas, Northwest Texas, and New Mexico conferences. At the same time he was the visiting bishop in Mexico and Central America. He enjoyed the Latin American contacts. He helped the Methodists in Monterey to establish a union church, and as time passed he said he came to know many sections of Mexico and the Mexican Methodist preachers about as intimately as he knew his Methodist preachers in Texas. After he became the bishop in Missouri one of the Missouri conferences raised money for building a theological school for the Mexican Methodists.

In administering the Dallas Area, Bishop Holt decided to capitalize on one of his greatest assets, namely, his skill in personal contacts. He set out to visit personally in every one of the 750 Methodist parsonages in his episcopal area. On entering a district, the presiding elder would meet him and drive him to one parsonage after another, and by the time his six-year term had ended he had visited in almost every one of the parsonages. It was no minor achievement in view of all the demands on a bishop's time, and in Bishop Holt's case, all of the traveling he did both in America and abroad.

In 1938 Bishop Holt became chairman of the Board of Pensions, M.E. Church, South, in St. Louis, and he continued as

chairman until he retired in 1956. The former M.E. Church Board of Pensions was in Chicago, and it seemed inadvisable or impossible to consolidate the two boards until 1956, seventeen years after Methodist union. Holt took the chairmanship seriously and on retiring he expressed satisfaction that during his eighteen-year chairmanship the average pension for retired ministers rose from $200 to $300 per year to $1,500 to $2,000.

Bishop of Missouri Area

In 1944, Holt became the bishop of the Missouri Area and continued until his retirement in 1956. He and Mrs. Holt rented an apartment at 20 S. Kingshighway in St. Louis, and they never moved again. Their love for St. Louis was great. Soon after their return to the city, Temple Israel held a special service honoring Bishop Holt. When the bishop rose to express gratitude for the honor accorded him, he mentioned his love for St. Louis and then said that after his death probably his ghost would be found hovering over or wandering in the vicinity of Kingshighway and Washington Boulevards in St. Louis

Honors

At this point it may be in order to mention Holt's honorary degrees and other honors. Certainly he received more of both than most ministers. Central College conferred on him the D.D. degree at the early age of 32 even though he was not a

graduate of the school. In time three universities, Duke, Toronto, and Victoria, awarded him the same degree. Southern College in Florida, Emory University, and the University of Arkansas gave him the LL.D. degree. The Litt.D. was bestowed on him by Ohio Wesleyan University and McKendree and Salt Lake City colleges. Syracuse University bewtowed on him the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology.

Holt was a thirty-third degree Mason, and a member of Tuscan Lodge, Scottish Rite bodies, and the Shrine of Masonry. He was a charter member of the Kiwanis Club in Dallas and St. Louis. He was the only man ever invited to give the commencement address at the University of Missouri as many as three times. He was the first pastor to become president of the Federal Council of Churches. He said he had been honored by being given the leadership in practically every church movement of which he had been a part. He served as President of the Council of Bishops, President of the Federal Council, President of the World Methodist Conference, and as a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. He said he had received every high honor his own church and Protestantism could offer. Can anyone elsein Protestantism, past or present, match that record?

Obviously Holt loved honors, and it is difficult for some to believe that he would have received as many honors as he did, had he not at least hinted subtly to the right people that

he would welcome them. But so far as this writer knows, the honors were bestowed willingly. Also, it is a fact that many others, including ministers, have desired honors, particularly honorary degrees, and have angled for them and did not in every instance get them. The fact that Ivan Lee Holt was cheerfully accorded so many honors seems significant.

Disappointments

Bishop Holt had some disappointments and regrets. On joining the St. Louis Conference in 1909, he hoped to become both a good pastor and a great preacher, as John M. Moore had suggested he might when he urged him to enter the ministry. As time passed he perceived that he could not be both. He said he found that succeeding by way of personal contacts required 1,001 little contacts in promoting projects and plans, and that robbed him of the many hours required in study, prayer, and preparation which are the prerequisites of great preaching.

While Holt seemed to be free of spite and ill will, occasionally he did show annoyance or petulance. Having served on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches from 1948 to 1954 he very much desired another six-year term because he knew he would retire as a Methodist bishop in 1956, and membership on the Central Committee would keep him active in an important cause for four extra years. However, when the Central Committee for 1954-1960 was announced, Holt's name was not on the list. He was greatly disappointed, began to complain, and

hinted that another Methodist bishop who was named to the Committee had unfairly kept him from getting the assignment. Friends were concerned about that show of petulance, and one of the Methodist bishops told this writer that he felt constrained to tell Bishop Holt to restrain himself, that he was acting like a spoiled child. That incident reminds us of the saying that all great men have feet of clay.

Author

Bishop Holt published six books and co-authored another with Elmer T. Clark. His books were: Babylonian Contract Tablets, The Return of Spring to a Man's Soul, The Search for a New Strategy in Protestantism, The Methodists of the World, The Biography of Bishop Eugene R. Hendrix, and The Missouri Bishops In addition, he largely prepared the Methodist Book of Worship, and was very proud of it, because it will have a continuing influence of Methodist worship. One of the bishops said facetiously that by means of the Book of Worship Holt introduced high mass in Methodism.

Record as Bishop of Missouri Area

Holt's record as the presiding bishop in the Missouri Area from 1944 to 1956 was notable for some advances and achievements. He said he was proud of the financial record of the churches and the annual conferences. Missouri Methodism's quota in the Bishops' Crusade in 1944 was $680,000, and the

churches of the area pledged $750,000. Holt claimed that achievement lifted the morale of the Methodists which in turn led to a remarkable program of expansion and giving. For example, the debts which had burdened Central College for years were paid. The heavy debt which had stifled Missouri Methodist Church in Columbia for many years was discharged. The million dollar debt of the former M.E. Church in Missouri was paid, albeit at sixty cents on the dollar, in accordance with a compromise plan worked out by Bishop John C. Broomfield when he was the presiding bishop. When the debts on the institutions were paid, for the first time in a generation Missouri Methodism was free of debt.

With the debts out of the way, the conferences began to raise money for important causes. Under Holt's leadership the Missouri and St. Louis conferences raised $500,000 each for ministers' pensions, and the Southwest Missouri Conference decided to raise $25,000 a year for twenty years for the same cause. The Missouri Area raised $1,000,000 for a new dormitory at Central College and it was named Holt Hall.

Holt believed that the successful financial campaigns during his twelve years as the presiding bishop in Missouri made it easier to raise money for St. Paul's School of Theology Methodist, when it was projected. Also, he was confident that the financial victories during his administration put an end to the defeatist attitude which characterized the churches and the

conferences in Missouri during and after the great depression.

After the death of Bishop Holt's first wife, $20,000 was given to establish the Leland Burks Holt Scholarship at Central College. When his second wife, Starr Carrithers Holt, died in 1958, some of her friends contributed to a fund at Central College with the understanding that the income from it would be used to purchase books for the library.

In his autobiographical notes, Bishop Holt said he was pleased with the eighteen farewell dinners, one in each district, which were given for him and his wife as his term as the presiding bishop in Missouri drew to a close. Then he said "I like to think that in the years between 1944 and 1956 I made some contribution toward the development of Missouri Methodism, and that the years to come will show greater progress than we were able to make in these eventful years."

Conclusion

In the fall of 1966, when in his eighty-first year, Bishop Holt dictated more autobiographical notes. He was ill at the time, having only partially recovered from an attack of pneumonia while attedning the World Methodist Conference in London. Apparently aware that he was recording his valediction he said he had lived through great hours in the history of the church and he regretted that he could not live to see the things which are yet to be in the life of the church. Noting

that he had attended nearly all of the interdenominational gatherings for fifty years, he said:

"In the years to come things will happen in the fellowship of the people called Christians which will transcend anything I have ever known or experienced, but I will always be thankful to God that I have lived through years when great dreams have been dreamed by leaders of the Christian Church, and that I have been privileged under God to be a promoter of those dreams....The church of tomorrow is about to be a greater church than any person alive today can dream about."

Well, it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss what has happened to the World Council of Churches in the fourteen years since Holt's death. A vital World Protestant Church, if it ever comes, is seemingly far in the future. But surely none here today would deny Ivan Lee Holt, or other persons, the privilege of dreaming great dreams and dedicating their all toward making them realities and blessings in the world.

In December, 1966, this writer, as was his custom, mailed a Christmas greeting to Bishop Holt in Georgia. Soon there came in return a card on which the frail bishop had written just three words with an obviously trembling hand, "Sitting in chair." Later came the announcement of his death on January 12, 1967, just three days after his eighty-first birthday. No doubt as he grew weaker in the fall of 1966, he determined to live until his eighty-first birthday, and he did with three

days to spare. Even to the end he was striving with a divine recklessness to achieve a goal he had set for himself.

When Winston Churchill died in his ninety-first year in 1965, Prime Minister Heath rose in the British Parliament to announce the passing of the great statesman and war leader. After a few words of eulogy, Heath said to his fellow members of the Parliament, "No matter how long you live, you will never see his like again."

To those of you who knew and worked with and under Bishop Ivan Lee Holt, this writer ventures the assertion, "No matter how long you live, you will never see his like again."

Albea Godbold
Executive Secretary, Emeritus
General Commission on Archives and History
Lake Junaluska, N.C.
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IVAN LEE HOLT, EVANGELIST

J.C. Montgomery, Jr.

Much has been written about Ivan Lee Holt the bishop, the ecumenical leader and world churchman. the preacher, and the author. Little has been written about his interest and activity in evangelism.

Although I had been taught from early childhood to think of Ivan Lee Holt as an outstanding minister, certainly one star crossed for destiny in church leadership, it was not until this great churchman was retired that I began to know and understand his passion for evangelism. Perhaps part of this was the Southern Methodist tradition from whence he had come, but I am inclined to think that the evangelistic thrust of his ministry was also a part of his fully-orbed approach to the minister's task.

Holt had been regarded as a liberal and an exponent of the social gospel. Indeed this characterization of him led some of his more conservative brethren to seek to deny him election to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1938, the year he was elected to the episcopacy. One of our family stories concerns how my late father and the late Reverend C.P. Thogmorton (father of Dean James Thogmorton, Central Methodist College) drove from the seat of the preceding annual conference in St. Louis to Forest Park for a

private conversation on a strategy to insure Holt's election.

Nonetheless it is true to say that Dr. Holt was fearless in speaking out against war, racial prejudice, and other societal evils of the day. This did not diminish the evangelistic emphasis of his ministry, indeed, was integral to it.

But Dr. Holt was Bishop Holt when I entered into the ministry after service in World War II, and it was in the next fifteen to twenty years that I really came to know the breadth and depth of his ministry, particularly his interest in evangelism.

During my pastorate at First Church, Sikeston, 1957-62, we had a number of preaching missions or evangelistic emphases. Some of these were a part of the state-wide evangelism programs involving preaching exchanges and two-by-two visitation. I was privileged to be state-wide chairman of one of these, and these programs were high water marks for Missouri Methodism in the nineteen-fifties. For one of our evangelistic emphases at First Church, we invited Bishop Holt, then just retired, to be our speaker in a three-day series of services.

Although evangelism was beginning to suffer from a bad press in those days, with resistance on the part of local pastors and even general church agencies to such programs, we did have a successful meeting at Sikeston. Bishop Holt's preaching was warm and with conviction, centering on Christ as the hope for the world and certainly as an individual's hope. Although

the immediate gains were small, I believe the meeting set the stage for later significant membership gains in the church.

Perhaps even more impressive than Holt's messages were his invitations to Christian commitment. Not only did he vary these altar calls, but he often prefaced them with invitations to prayer commitment for worshipers while still in the pew. He made such appeals reasonable, reachable, and certainly relevant for the individual's life. One got the impression that Christian commitment was the natural thing to do, so gracious were the invitations. I firmly believe that I learned more about pulpit appeals from those three days than any other academic or church experiences.

All of Bishop Holt's contacts were occasions for such a commitment or invitation, sometimes implied as well as spoken or written. A book review, contacts with the Women's Society or Methodist Men or the Epworth League, ecumenical opportunities as well as his books, gave a forum for the evangelistic message.

For Holt, in one sense worldly-wise, great intellect and one who had rubbed shoulders with world leaders, the way of Jesus was still the only way, truth, and life for the world as well as for the individual. His evangelistic passion could be summed up in two sentences from The Return of Spring to Man's Soul (p. 94), a sermon on Simon Peter:

> The faith of Jesus and the cynicism of the modern pessimist are alike intellectually possible, but only the former is morally possible. Jesus has somewhat to say to each of us.

AS WE REMEMBER HIM

We asked some 25 clergymen across Missouri who had served with or under Bishop Holt to share with a favorite memory or story about the Bishop. Dr. Montgomery's brief note on Holt as an evangelist was one of those memories. All of the responses reflect a pride in Bishop Holt's leadership, warm memories of the Bishop as a person, and a deep love for the church and this giant who led it for so many years.

I am sure that our bishops today are capable administrators. But when I think of great bishops, I think of Ivan Lee Holt in the area of the ecumenical world Church and the leadership he gave there. He knew how to preside at an Annual Confer ence, but we used to joke about what his 'travelogue' would be as we went to conference. On the other hand, the vision of the conference was enlarged by his messages about the mission of the church.

Bishop Holt prided himself that he knew his pastors. One day at an annual conference at St. John's Church in St. Louis, a group of us (then) young ministers and our wives were standing in a circle in a small room, talking and relaxing, when Bishop Holt came through the room. I was standing next to a friend who was obviously pregnant. Bishop Holt stopped to visit with us. As he left he put his arms around my friend and

me and said to us, "I'm so happy for you." Harriet and I thought it was very funny, but I'm not sure that the other couple thought so.

One other thing: Bishop Holt inevitably asked his men, "Are you happy in your work?" I was always tempted to be honest and say, "no, Bishop." I wonder what his reaction would have been.

------Marvin Fortel

There are many memories of Bishop Holt---presiding over the annual conference dressed in grey striped trousers and frock coat. Always proper in pseech, in dress, in bodily posture, in reply, in poise. He seldom kept any letters written to him or copies of his replies, but he would remember the correspondence. He never kept a date book and never became confused with his schedule until Starr, his second wife, insisted that he do so----and then he did get mixed up.

When our three kids were about 9, 6, and 3 years of age and we were at Saint Luke's Church in Saint Louis, Bishop Holt preached for us one Sunday morning. Jim broke loose from Corneille as Bishop Holt and I were going out the aisle after the service. He ran down to me and I carried him out. It was obvious that Bishop Holt enjoyed it. But more was to come.

Bishop and Mrs. Holt had the noon meal with us in the

parsonage. When Bob had finished his meal we excused him. After a bit Mrs. Holt left the table, and in a moment called for Bishop Holt to come to the bathroom. Bob had climbed up onto the lavatory, taken out my shaving mug and brush, and had lathered himself from top to toe, then the lavatory, then the medicine cabinet. Both Bishop and Mrs. Holt greatly enjoyed it and helped in the cleaning up process.

When the Bishop would see Corneille through the years, he never asked, "How are the children?" but always, "How are Lucy, Robert, and James?"

------Bishop A. Monk Bryan

In August, 1933, following my graduation from high school in May, I attended a conference meeting of the Epworth League held on the campus of Central College, Fayette. The speaker for the occasion was Dr. Ivan Lee Holt, pastor of St. John's Methodist Church in St. Louis. His platform messages that week changed the entire direction of my life. Three months later, as a freshman on that same campus, I made the decision to become a minister in the Methodist Church. This came as a result of those challenging messages he gave us in August. Through the years since that time I came further under his influence. He gave me four appointments after becoming my Bishop. Also, as a result of his nomination, I became a member of the 1956

Lacour Overseas Evangelistic Mission to Japan for three months, helping establish new congregations as part of the observance of the centennial of Christianity in that country.

During his many years as Bishop of Missouri, Ivan Lee Holt lived in his apartment on Lindell Blvd., a few blocks south of his beloved St. John's Church. He made it a practice to attend the annual Christmas party in the St. Louis District. As a matter of fact, due to his many trips to 'everywhere', we occasionally had to adjust the date of the party to ensure his presence with us. He was always the program for the evening and he always brought us a delightful Christmas story. Perhaps our most memorable Christmas season with him was the year he came back from a visit to Georgia and announced to us his engagement to Starr Carrithers. He concluded his very straight-faced and brief announcement and, with a twinkle in his eyes, said, "And you will see that there isn't anything wrong with my eyesight, either."

------Elbridge W. Bartley, Jr.

There are two memories about Bishop Holt that stand out for me. He was a pre-eminent master at presiding. He could handle any unexpected happening with expertise and despatch. About 1950 or 1951, I was at West Plains when Bishop Holt visited our district, as he did each one. He chose to have

each pastor and wife to meet with him for a few minutes, in order that we might know each other better. He knew the first name of each clergy, wife, and all the children. That endeared him to us "small, unimportant" ministers.

------Liston Johnston

Some characteristics of Bishop Holt stick in my mind. He was honest with pastors and lay persons. He said to a small group of us one day, "Being a Bishop is easy if you can appoint the right person to the right place at the right time." It was not his nature to impose his intellectualism on others, regardless of their educational background. There was a dignity about his relationships with people. You could be proud of him.

He knew the parsonage families. When our two sons were very young, they liked to have Bishop Holt visit us. He would aways give them each a quarter. They would say, "Dad, your money is all right, but the Bishop's money is special." On another occasion, he spent the night with us. Lola Mae got up early and was making breakfast. She stepped out of the kitchen for a few minutes. When she returned, there was the Bishop, down on one knee, looking in the cabinet under the sink. Lola Mae asked, "Bishop, what are you trying to do?" He said, "Where is the shoe polish? I need to clean up my shoes." He sat down and shined his shoes while they chatted about the

church.

If the Bishop were present at various meetings we attended, he would ease his way back to us and ask how we were and especially how the boys were. In our early years at Normandy Church, Lola Mae was critically ill with a blocked intestine. The surgeon, Dr. Fleming Harper, gave her a 50-50 chance of survival. I do not know how the Bishop heard about it because I told only two people, but two days later Bishop Holt was there.

My first appointment following graduation from Eden was at Eureka. I had been there four years and wanted a change. We let the Bishop and the superintendent know. At the annual conference, Dr. Harry Hunter, the D.S., told me we were going to Hornersville, in the Bootheel. I told him I would go if the Bishop and the Cabinet wanted me to. However, my wife had some health problems. The Bishop knew about Lola Mae's asthma trouble. He said "she needs to be here in or around St. Louis. Also, she is a city girl and knows her way around." It was not until the last day of the conference, about one hour before the Bishop was scheduled to read the appointments that the superintendent came and whispered in my ear, "The Bishop is appointing you to Troy, Mo." I said to him, "where in the world is Troy?"

------Herman A. Lehwald